

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

United States District Court
Southern District of Texas

Maria Steffan Frank, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

versus

PNK (Lake Charles) LLC,

Defendant.

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Civil Action H-17-3832

ENTERED

June 12, 2018

David J. Bradley, Clerk

Opinion on Personal Jurisdiction

PNK (Lake Charles) LLC, is a Louisiana corporation. It owns and operates the L’Auberge du Lac Casino Resort in Lake Charles. On November 30, 2015, apparently, Maria Steffan Frank’s mother, Betty Steffan, attempted to sit down on a swivel chair in front of a slot machine. She fell and hit her head on the floor. She died the next day from her injuries.

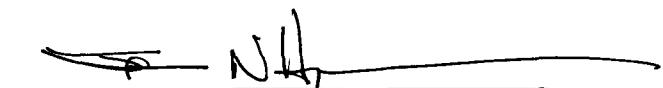
Frank and other family members claim this court has jurisdiction over PNK because it advertises its casino in Texas, and specifically targets Houston. The company markets through mailers, billboards, television commercials, radio stations, and the internet. They say it solicited Steffan into visiting the casino by directly mailing brochures to her house.

PNK participates in the national American market – it advertises in ten states, including Texas and Louisiana. Its advertisements and marketing materials, however, do not establish systematic and continuous contacts with Texas that confer general jurisdiction.

The court also does not have specific jurisdiction because Steffan voluntarily went to the casino in a different state. Nothing suggests that falling from the swivel chair resulted from PNK’s advertisements.

This case will be transferred to the United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, Lake Charles Division.

Signed on June 12, 2018, at Houston, Texas.



Lynn N. Hughes
United States District Judge